

Annual Review 2023

Journeying Together



**DO
JUSTICE**

#DoJustice



caritas
social action network

Caritas Social Action Network

is an agency of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and a member of Caritas Internationalis

“Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each individual’s history. That is the closeness that Jesus embodies. He knows that someone’s life can be changed by a single encounter.”

Pope Francis, Homily at the opening of the Synodal Path,
10 October 2021

“CSAN is vital and valuable in our work. The solidarity and peer support are so important.”

CSAN member, members’ survey 2024

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FOREWORD

I am of that generation of Catholics that was formed in gospel-based social action by such movements as the Young Christian Workers and, in my case the Young Christian Students, so it is an immense privilege to be the new Chair of the CSAN Trustees which seeks to support its member organisations in making the teaching of Jesus visible today.



I would like to thank Bishop Terry Draine who served as the Chair of CSAN before me with distinction for more than ten years. In recent years, the membership of CSAN has grown, especially with the number of Caritas diocesan agencies joining the network. I can see early on in my tenure that this is an inspiring network, committed to the building up of the Kingdom of God in England and Wales.

The present time is often described as a time of crisis, emergency even, and without doubt there is an urgent need to proclaim a bold alternative vision of human flourishing in the public arena and to work to restore the dignity of people caught up in poverty of various kinds, but this is also a time of hope and renewal. As Christians we must never give in to despair, “for the love of Christ urges us on” (2 Corinthians 5;14).

Yours in Christ

+ Malcolm McMahon

Archbishop of Liverpool, Chair of CSAN

“It is important to look at the ‘principle and foundation’ from which everything begins ever anew: by loving. Loving God with our whole life and loving our neighbour as ourselves. Not our strategies, our human calculations, the ways of the world, but love of God and neighbour: that is the heart of everything. And how do we channel this momentum of love? I would propose two verbs, two movements of the heart, on which I would like to reflect: to adore and to serve. We love God through adoration and service.”

Pope Francis, Homily at the Conclusion of the First Synod on Synodality,
29 October 2023

MESSAGE FROM RAYMOND FRIEL, CEO OF CARITAS SOCIAL ACTION NETWORK

2023 was a challenging year and a year of hope and renewal. It was a challenging year as the cost-of-living crisis deepened and more people were affected by the rising cost of basics, stagnant wages and an inadequate benefits safety net. As well as more than 13 million people living in relative poverty in the UK, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported that in 2022 3.8 million people in the UK experienced destitution, that is they were not able to provide for their basic needs to stay warm, clean and fed.

In the Catholic tradition, poverty is more than material deprivation. We are also deeply concerned about relational poverty, about the strain put on relationships because of poverty, about the isolation and exclusion experienced by so many, young and old, and about the spiritual poverty of those who have lost any sense of meaning or purpose.

Hope is a foundational virtue in the Catholic tradition. Despite the bad news, we will always hold a candle up for the good news of the Gospel. That good news is embodied in the fifty-two member charities of the Caritas Social Action Network, who work every day to help to restore dignity and agency to people who have been caught up in poverty and hostile environments.

I hope that this review gives a sense of the work of the national team in their support for the social action network and in raising a prophetic voice in the public arena as we continue to commit ourselves to “perfecting the work of justice under the inspiration of charity” (Gaudium et Spes, 72).

Raymond Friel OBE

**CEO, Caritas Social
Action Network**



OUR VISION

Centred on Christ, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, our vision for the nations of England and Wales is of a civilization of love, solidarity and justice, where the dignity of every human being is respected and upheld; where every person can flourish and live in peace and freedom as part of one human family; where there is no exclusion, discrimination, or dehumanising poverty; where the voices of the women, men and children in the most vulnerable situations are listened to, discerned, and inform action; where everyone is encouraged to contribute to the common good.

OUR MISSION

Caritas Social Action Network shares in the mission of the Catholic Church, committed to tackling the causes of poverty, promoting justice and restoring dignity, specifically by convening and animating alliances of member charities involved in the social mission of the Church, leading on the formation of those involved in social action, and raising a prophetic Catholic voice in the public arena.



OUR TEAM

As we continue our work in 2024, the CSAN national team is as follows:

- Raymond Friel: Chief Executive Officer
- Kweku Bedu-Addo: Finance and Operations Manager
- Daisy Vanderputt: Senior Officer for Policy and Public Affairs
- Bernadette Durcan: Research and Programmes Officer
- Aliya Zahin: Migration Officer*
- with thanks to Mary Gandy for all her support as board minutes secretary.

**The post of Migration Officer is supported by a grant from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales*



CSAN Team (L to R: Raymond, Berna, Aliya, Daisy, Kweku)

"Thank you to all of the team who are always professional, polite and represent the values and ethos of the Gospel in communications, events and in person. Congratulations on all that you continue to do."

CSAN member, members' survey 2024

DEVELOPING THE NETWORK

In 2023, we welcomed **Caritas Southwark** to the family of Caritas Social Action Network. In March 2024, it was a pleasure to be with them to celebrate their first anniversary at St George's Cathedral. At the Mass to open the celebrations, Archbishop John Wilson gave something of a masterclass in Catholic Social teaching.

He said, "We are committed to the common good, to the well-being of all members of our society, where the good of each serves the good of all. This is so important in a culture that often prioritises individualism, that tells us to put people first, to make sure we get what we need, even if we have to trample over other people to get to the top... But we have a different vision. Christ shows a way to human flourishing together through service and self-giving. We believe in the dignity and worth of every human being."



Archbishop John Wilson

With Caritas Southwark now part of the CSAN network, this brings the total of diocesan Caritas agencies in the network to eighteen. These agencies meet in the Caritas Diocesan Alliance, chaired by Deborah Fisher from Caritas Plymouth, for support and inspiration, sharing of good practice and discussion of the issues faced by Caritas diocesan agencies.

New Directions: CSAN Alliances

At our Leadership Conference at Villa Palazzola just outside Rome in September 2022, we shared our reflections for 'new directions' for the network. Collaboration for mission emerged as a strong theme, as did the need for an infrastructure to support this way of working. From this came the proposal for a new architecture of 'alliances' in the network.

A **Leadership Alliance** was formed (taking over from the Directors' Forum). This alliance, chaired by Elizabeth Palmer from the SVP, provides

essential networking, peer support and the exchange of best practices and innovative solutions. In April 2023, the Leaders' Alliance met for a day conference sponsored by CCLA at the offices in London. We want to learn more from our own leaders, so many of whom have years of experience in the field of social action. At the April event, we were inspired by Andy Keen-Downs, the CEO of PACT (The Prison Advice and Care Trust) since 2005. In November 2023 the Alliance met for a residential



CSAN members in Rome - Sept 2022



Andy Keen-Downs

conference at High Leigh. Our liturgies were led by Jo Boyce and we enjoyed inspirational inputs from David Wells, Avril Baigent, Fr Jan Nowotnik and Nikki Dhillon-Keane.

As well as the Leaders' Alliance, we created an **Advocacy Alliance** chaired by Ben Gilchrist from Caritas Shrewsbury. This alliance has focused on developing the capacity of the network for the work of advocacy for justice by sharing good practice and priorities and hearing from other organisations leaders in the sector, such as JPIT's Let's End Poverty Movement and Niall Cooper from Church Action on Poverty.

CSAN has convened an Education Forum in the past which was discontinued in 2020. However, feedback from the members suggested there was still a need for those involved in education or youth to be able to convene. Our initial idea for an Education Alliance has evolved into a **Youth Alliance** and 2024 will see the work of this alliance develop, chaired by Deacon Jim Hannigan from Northampton Diocese.

MIGRATION ALLIANCE

St Thomas Centre, Manchester
March 2024



Working with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Some of our alliances are run in partnership with, or on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Our new **Migration Alliance**, chaired by Patrick O'Dowd from Caritas Salford, is a case in point.

Our previous focus had been community sponsorship and excellent work was done in setting up community sponsorship projects in many parishes.

With the appointment of a Migration Officer, a post funded by the Bishops' Conference, our focus widened to include the legislation around immigration, support for people seeking asylum in our country, and raising awareness of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. The Migration

Alliance has convened two day conferences, in London in 2023 and in Manchester in 2024. These events brought together many members from the network involved in various aspects of migration for fruitful networking.

We have continued to promote **Love the Stranger**, the publication by the Department for International Affairs of the Bishops' Conference. This powerful document is a Catholic response to migrants and refugees which places the human being at the heart of our pastoral outreach, looking beyond statistics and policies to the person – each with a name, a face and a story.



Patrick O'Dowd addresses the Migration Alliance in Manchester

We continue to convene the Bishops' Conference's Criminal Justice Forum, chaired by Bishop Richard Moth. In line with the new structure, the forum has been renamed the **Criminal Justice Alliance**. In its annual online meeting, the alliance promotes the work of the Bishops' Conference national chaplaincy to prisons and the work of our members most involved in supporting people in the criminal justice system and their families, PACT and Out There.

In 2020, we held our first Domestic Abuse Forum, having taken up this work when the Bishops' Conference's domestic abuse working group (DAWG) was wound up in 2019. In line with the new structure, this forum is now the **Domestic Abuse Alliance**. We have worked very closely with the National Board of Catholic Women and Nikki Dhillon-Keane from their Violence Against Women and Girls committee to expand the annual online event to more frequent events. In the last year we have promoted the **Safe in Faith** (Caritas Westminster) Domestic Abuse Signposting Toolkit for Churches and Faith Leaders, available from their website:

https://caritaswestminster.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/0803324____Signposting-Toolkit.pdf

Jubilee 2025

As our partnership working with the Bishops' Conference develops in 2024, we are pleased to contribute to the national working group for Jubilee 2025 in England and Wales. More information on Jubilee 2025 can be found at:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/jubilee-2025/>



Caritas Internationalis and Caritas Europa

CSAN along with our sister Caritas agency CAFOD are members of Caritas Europa and the global confederation of Caritas Internationalis. In May 2023, CSAN and CAFOD were represented at the Caritas Europa Regional Conference and the Caritas Internationalis General Assembly, held at the same time in Rome. We were honoured to have an audience with Pope Francis who reminded us that “Charity – caritas – is our very life; it is what makes us ‘be’ what we are. When we embrace God’s love and when we love one another in him, we plumb the depths of our identity, as individuals and as Church, and the meaning of our existence.”

COMECE Social Affairs Commission

COMECE is the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union. There are several commissions within the overarching structure, including the Social Affairs Commissions, which would be the closest equivalent to the Department for Social Justice at the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. CSAN represents the Bishops on the COMECE Social Affairs Commission, although since the UK left the EU, we have observer status only. We continue to attend meetings online and contribute as constructively as possible.

L to R: Bishop Stephen Wright, Chair of CAFOD trustees, Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, with Raymond Friel in Rome



ADVANCING EDUCATION, TRAINING, PRACTICE AND FORMATION

The second object of CSAN, after developing the network of those working in social action, is to advance the education, training, practice and formation of those working in the field of social action.

Our work to support this object has taken different forms over the years. In the last year, a major focus in this area has been our **Aspiring Leaders Programme**. In June 2023, twenty participants in Cohort 1 completed the four-residential programme and the feedback was very encouraging. In January 2024, we launched Cohort 2, with fourteen participants and three facilitators from the network.

The programme provides an introduction to Catholic Social Teaching, explores a Gospel-inspired approach to servant leadership grounded in the reality of leadership, and draws on the most helpful thinking from the leadership schools on adaptive and transformational leadership to develop participants' knowledge and skills in managing other people and challenging circumstances. Participants work in learning groups under the guidance of an experienced facilitator from the network. Inspirational keynotes from Catholic leaders such as Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, and Maria Nyman, General Secretary of Caritas Europa have been highlights of the programme.

"Great and fruitful day! Thank you for the food for thought and for the food."

Participant in CST Training Day



Caro Hattersley is interviewed for Cohort 1



Cohort 1 Aspiring Leaders at the shrine of St Oscar Romero, St George's Cathedral

"Incredibly fruitful and inspiring. Just the right pace for learning but also the opportunity for reflection and discussion."

Participant in the Aspiring Leaders Programme, Cohort 2

"Thank you for the incredible way that you have supported and fostered this cohort and their learning culture. You have blessed me and fed me with spiritual wisdom and new insights."

Participant in Aspiring Leaders Programme, Cohort 1



CST training day at the London Jesuit Centre

Another major development in our formation offer has been our new **Catholic Social Teaching training days**. In October and November 2023, we ran the first of these new training days in London. The day provided an introduction to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching as well as an opportunity to reflect on its application. A highlight of the day for many was the 'spotlight' session when we were joined by CSAN member organisations, such as Caritas Westminster and the Jesuit Refugee Service UK, to hear about Catholic Social Teaching in practice, on the front line of poverty and disadvantage.

A significant development in our practice and training was the **Homes for Ukraine** programme

for which we have partnered with CSAN member, St John of God Hospitaller Services. In the course of 2023, around 140 Ukrainian guests were matched with hosts in this country, with most having arrived, some awaiting visas. This project was supported by funds from the Albert Gubay Foundation and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.

In 2023, the CSAN team saw the need to bring together Communications Officers from dioceses and the wider network for a series of **Comms Roundtables**. Although not one of our alliances, these informal gatherings proved to be very supportive for those involved. We will continue to discern the needs of this important group of people in our network.



SJOG HOMES FOR
UKRAINE

Are you interested in offering a home to those displaced by the unnecessary war in Ukraine?



Saint John of God Hospitaller Services is a registered charity: 1108428

Supported by



THE ALBERT GUBAY FOUNDATION

LIVERPOOL

Liverpool Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EW





Friday
18th November
2pm

OFFERING A COHERENT CATHOLIC VOICE IN THE PUBLIC ARENA

With the appointment of a new Senior officer for Policy and Public Affairs in 2023, we were able to continue our work of developing a coherent Catholic voice in the public arena for the benefit of people who are in circumstances of poverty and disadvantage of various kinds.

In October 2023, CSAN joined forces with the Catholic Union to prepare a submission to the Treasury ahead of the Autumn Statement. Our focus was very much on the increase in poverty, especially child poverty, with a specific request to remove the harmful two-child benefit cap. We published our own response to the King's Speech in November 2023 expressing concern and disappointment that there was no clear strategy from the government for tackling poverty.

We continued to oppose the Illegal Migration Bill up to the point it became law in July 2023, publishing a strong statement condemning this "cruel and unworkable" piece of legislation, with particular concern at the lack of protection from modern slavery or limits to child detention. Our role is not just to condemn of course but to encourage the Catholic community to respond concretely to situations of injustice. To help in that work, we produced our Call to Action following on from the publication of Love the Stranger. This can be found on our website: <https://www.csan.org.uk/love-the-stranger-call-to-action/>





CSAN trustee Sir John Battle at the launch of Do Justice

Do Justice

Our Catholic voice in the public square was perhaps heard at its clearest with the launch of our Do Justice campaign. Although the launch itself was in February 2024, the seed was planted at the Leaders' Alliance day conference in London in April 2023.

From there, with the input of a number of CSAN members in working groups and roundtable discussions, we worked towards the 'core text' entitled, ***Do Justice: A Vision for Spiritual and Civic Renewal in England and Wales***, which can be downloaded from our Do Justice website at: <https://dojustice.co.uk/>. The Do Justice core text is a foundational resource, a reminder in the public arena that we do have a different story to tell and a different vision to offer our country.

The Do Justice campaign will continue to be a major focus for us in 2024. We will continue to develop resources to support the Catholic community. So far we have produced Do Justice: for parishes, Do Justice: for schools (in collaboration with the Oscar Romero Award) and Do Justice: Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. We have more worksheets in preparation and would gladly hear from any group who would like to collaborate on a resource. We would also like to highlight the projects of the network in our case studies section, so please tell us about all the inspirational work which is going on: <https://dojustice.co.uk/casestudies/>

DO JUSTICE

OPERATING FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

Caritas Social Action Network operates for the public benefit in England and Wales through all our activities. Our network development work supports the independent charities and Caritas diocesan agencies in our membership in their work with people in poverty and exclusion. Our formation and training work contributes to a deeper understanding of and commitment to the work of social justice. Our voice in the public arena is a contribution to a vision for the flourishing of all people in our society. We support and convene a network of charities who between them spend in the region of £450m for the benefit of people in poverty and marginalised circumstances. Our work serves the common good of England and Wales.

Governance

Caritas Social Action Network is a registered charity, a Limited Company by guarantee without share capital and an official agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Information about our governance can be found on the websites of the Charity Commission (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>) and Companies House (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>).

Our Patron is Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster. Our Chair, from December 2023, is The Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool. He took over from The Right Reverend Terry Draine, Bishop of

Middlesbrough, who stood down after ten years of distinguished service to the board of trustees. We have one other bishop trustee, the Right Reverend Paul Hendricks, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Southwark. In December 2023, the board of trustees appointed a new Honorary Treasurer, Lisa Lilley, and elected two Vice-Chairs, Julia Corcoran and Daphne Amevenu. Our other trustees are Nicola Thomas, Richard Harries, Maria Blazquez, Johan Bergström-Allen, Jonathan Heard, and Sir John Battle. The Chair of the Leaders' Alliance, Elizabeth Palmer, has a seat on the board. You'll find more information on our trustees on the CSAN website: <https://www.csan.org.uk/about-csan/people/>.

Finances and funding

We are grateful for our ongoing grant funding from the Catholic Trust for England and Wales, and the funding received from our members through annual subscriptions. These funds enable us to plan a core programme of work. We have supplemented this with income from donations and gifts from individuals and groups, many of whom have contributed on a regular basis. We are grateful to all our funders especially, for their support with the Homes for Ukraine project, the Albert Gubay Foundation, the Kathleen Hannay Memorial Charity and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. We are grateful for the ongoing support for our events and programmes from CCLA and those funders who wish to remain anonymous.

The total income for 2023 amounted to some £426k compared with £404k in 2022. Total expenditure in 2023 was some £409k compared with some £344k in 2022. CSAN members and stakeholders have already received a statement about CSAN's financial losses. You can find this statement on our website: <https://www.csan.org.uk/news/csan-statement-on-financial-losses/>.

Premises

CSAN's registered office is at Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB. We are grateful to be in the home of CAFOD, a friendly and supportive environment. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the CSAN team has moved to hybrid working, but we still ensure we have team days in the office together. The CSAN board meets in Romero House four times a year.

Our members

Our members are the lifeblood of CSAN, the reason for our organisation. There are now fifty-two charities in our membership, all of them working on the frontline of human need to restore dignity and agency to people. You will find the full list of our members and more information about what they do on our website: <https://www.csan.org.uk/member/>.

We hope this review gives a sense of the benefits of being a member of Caritas Social Action Network. If you would like to enquire about membership for your organisation, please contact us at: admin@csan.co.uk.

"One of the most rewarding networks to be part of. Thank you!"

CSAN member, members' survey 2024



“It is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church’s social doctrine, the light of which is Truth, Justice its objective, and Love its driving force.”

Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961), 226



"We must put human dignity back at the centre, and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need."

Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 168

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